

شَرْحُ
الْقَوْلِ عَمَّا الْاَرْبَعَةِ

An Explanation of
Muḥammad Ibn ‘Abdul-Wahhāb’s
Four Principles of *Shirk*

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Transliteration Table

Consonants,

ء	'	د	d	ض	ḍ	ك	k
ب	b	ذ	dh	ط	ṭ	ل	l
ت	t	ر	r	ظ	ẓ	م	m
ث	th	ز	z	ع	ʿ	ن	n
ج	j	س	s	غ	gh	ه	h
ح	ḥ	ش	sh	ف	f	و	w
خ	kh	ص	ṣ	ق	q	ي	y

Vowels, diphthongs, etc.

Short:	اَ	a	يَ	i	وُ	u
Long:	اَ	ā	يَ	ī	وُ	ū
diphthongs:			اَيَ	ay	اَوُ	aw

Foreword

All Praise is due to Allāh, who created us to worship Him, for He said:

وَمَا خَلَقْتُ الْجِنَّ وَالْإِنْسَ إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُونِ ﴿٥٦﴾

And I did not create men or *jinn* except to worship Me.¹

And may peace and blessings be upon the Prophet Muḥammad ibn ‘Abdillāh, the greatest of all men, and the most noble of all prophets, who came with the simple message of Islām, the essence of which is to worship Allāh alone.

قُلْ هَذِهِ

سَبِيلِي أَدْعُو إِلَى اللَّهِ عَلَى بَصِيرَةٍ أَنَا وَمَنِ اتَّبَعَنِي وَسُبْحَانَ

اللَّهِ وَمَا أَنَا مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ ﴿١٠٨﴾

Say (O Muḥammad): This is my path, I call to Allāh, upon clear knowledge. I (do this) and those that follow me, and Allāh is Exalted and Glorified (over all imperfections that others attribute to Him). And I am not of those who commit *shirk*.²

From this verse, it is seen that the call of the Prophet (ﷺ) – in fact, the call of all the prophets – is to Allāh. This call comprises of two aspects: the knowledge and recognition of who Allāh is (and this is known in Arabic as *tawḥīd al-‘itiqādī*), and the singling out of Allāh in worship, so that none is worshipped except Allāh (and this is known as *tawḥīd al-‘amālī*).

So the first matter involves purifying one’s conception of Allāh, and ascribing to Him the Most Perfect Names and Noble Attributes. It involves negating the existence of any object or deity that has the capability of creating, sustaining, nourishing or controlling the creation except for Allāh. It involves affirming the Perfect existence of Allāh, having no partners or sons.

And the second matter involves purifying one’s actions of worship, so that none except Allāh is worshipped. This is a logical consequence of the first aspect of

¹ Sūrah *al-Dhāriyāt*, verse 56.

² Sūrah *Yūsuf*, verse 108.

A Short Biography of Muḥammad ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhāb

He is Abū al-Ḥusayn Muḥammad ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhāb ibn Sulaymān ibn Alī ibn Musharrif al-Wuhaybi, from the tribe of Tamīm.⁴ He was born in the city of ‘Uyaynah, which is in the middle of the Arabian Peninsula, in the year 1115 A.H. (1704 C.E.). He was from a family of scholars and learned men, for his father, ‘Abd al-Wahhāb ibn Sulaymān (d. 1153 A.H.) was one of the famous scholars of Najd, and the *Qāḍī* (religious judge) of ‘Uyaynah. And his grandfather, Sulaymān ibn Alī (d. 1079 A.H.) was also well-known for his knowledge, as was his uncle Ibrāhīm ibn Sulaymān.

He memorised the Qur’ān before he was ten years old, and learnt from many scholars in his area, including his father and uncle. He also travelled to Madinah and Iraq to study with its scholars. In Madinah, he met and studied with the famous Indian scholar Muḥammad Ḥayat al-Sindi (d. 1165 A.H.), and was greatly impressed with him, as was the teacher with his student. He also studied with the ḥadīth scholar ‘Abdullāh ibn Sālim al-Baṣrī (d. 1134 A.H.), and the famous scholar ‘Abdullāh ibn Sayf.

As for his students, they are too many to be numbered. Foremost amongst them were his sons, Ḥusayn, ‘Alī, ‘Abdullāh and Ibrāhīm, and his grandson ‘Abd al-Rahmān ibn Ḥasan, who authored the famous *Fath al-Majīd Sharḥ Kitāb al-Tawḥīd*. Also amongst his students are: ‘Abd al-‘Azīz ibn Muḥammad ibn Sa‘ūd (d. 1218 A.H.), Ḥamad ibn Nāṣir ibn Mu‘ammar (d. 1225 A.H.), and ‘Abd al-‘Azīz ibn ‘Abdullāh ibn Ḥussayn (d. 1237 A.H.).

He wrote many works, in ḥadīth, *tafsīr*, *fiqh*, and general topics. However, his primary focus was ‘*aqidah*. The following is a list of his more famous works:

- 1- *Kitāb al-Tawḥīd*. This book without a doubt is the spearhead of the Shaykh’s *da‘wah*, and his most famous work.⁵

⁴ Most of this biography is taken from the introduction to *Fath al-Majīd*, pps. 14-20.

⁵ Although the work has been translated a number of times, none of these translations explains the work in a detailed manner. Perhaps one of the more useful translations is the one by Sameh Strauch (International Islamic Publishing House, Riyadh, 1998 A.H.), entitled *The Book of Tawḥīd*.

The Arabic Text

القواعد الأربع

لشيخ الإسلام الإمام المجدد
الشيخ محمد بن عبد الوهاب

— رحمه الله —

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

أَسْأَلُ اللَّهَ الْكَرِيمَ رَبَّ الْعَرْشِ الْعَظِيمِ أَنْ يَتَوَلَّكَ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ، وَأَنْ يَجْعَلَكَ مُبَارَكًا أَيُّمَا كُنْتَ، وَأَنْ يَجْعَلَكَ مِمَّنْ إِذَا أُعْطِيَ شَكَرَ، وَإِذَا ابْتُلِيَ صَبَرَ، وَإِذَا أُذْنِبَ اسْتَغْفَرَ، فَإِنَّ هَذِهِ الثَّلَاثَ عُتْوَانُ السَّعَادَةِ.

اعْلَمْ — أَرْشَدَكَ اللَّهُ لِبَطَاعَتِهِ — : أَنَّ الْحَنِيفِيَّةَ مِلَّةُ إِبْرَاهِيمَ : أَنْ تَعْبُدَ اللَّهَ وَحْدَهُ مُخْلِصًا لَهُ الدِّينَ كَمَا قَالَ — تَعَالَى —

﴿وَمَا خَلَقْتُ الْجِنَّ وَالْإِنْسَ إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُونِ﴾ سورة الذاريات [٥٦-٥١]

فَإِذَا عَرَفْتَ أَنَّ اللَّهَ خَلَقَكَ لِعِبَادَتِهِ فَاعْلَمْ : أَنَّ الْعِبَادَةَ لَا تُسَمَّى عِبَادَةً إِلَّا مَعَ التَّوْحِيدِ، كَمَا أَنَّ الصَّلَاةَ لَا تُسَمَّى صَلَاةً إِلَّا مَعَ الطَّهَارَةِ، فَإِذَا دَخَلَ الشُّرْكُ فِي الْعِبَادَةِ فَسَدَتْ كَالْحَدِثِ إِذَا دَخَلَ فِي الطَّهَارَةِ.

فَإِذَا عَرَفْتَ أَنَّ الشُّرْكَ إِذَا خَالَطَ الْعِبَادَةَ أَفْسَدَهَا وَأَحْبَطَ الْعَمَلَ وَصَارَ صَاحِبُهُ مِنَ الْخَالِدِينَ فِي النَّارِ عَرَفْتَ أَنَّ أَهَمَّ مَا عَلَيْكَ : مَعْرِفَةُ ذَلِكَ، لَعَلَّ اللَّهَ أَنْ يُخَلِّصَكَ مِنْ هَذِهِ الشَّبَكَةِ، وَهِيَ الشُّرْكُ بِاللَّهِ الَّذِي قَالَ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى فِيهِ:

The English Translation of the Text

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In The Name of Allāh, the Ever-Merciful, the Bestower of Mercy

I ask Allāh, the Noble Lord of the Great Throne, that He be your Protector in this world and the Hereafter, and that He makes you blessed wherever you are, and that He makes you from those (people) that, when given, are thankful; and when tested, are patient; and when they sin, they repent. And verily these three are the keys to happiness.

Know, may Allāh guide you to His obedience, that the *ḥanifiyyah* - the religion of Ibrāhīm - is that you worship Allāh alone, sincerely, making the religion purely for Him. As Allāh, the Most Exalted, says:

وَمَا خَلَقْتُ الْجِنَّ وَالْإِنْسَ إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُونِ ﴿٥٦﴾

“And I did not create the *jinn* and mankind except to worship Me.” [Sūrah *Al-Dhāriyāt*, verse 56]

So when you know that Allāh created you to worship Him, then know that ‘worship’ is not considered worship except with *tawḥīd* (monotheism), like the *ṣalāh* (prayer) is not an acceptable *ṣalāh* except with purity (*ṭahārah*). So if *shirk* enters into worship, it is not accepted, just as impurity destroys purity if it enters into it.

So if you know that when *shirk* is mixed (with worship), the worship is not accepted, and destroys the action, thus making the person acting (upon this kind of worship) from the people who will be permanently in the Hellfire, then you will realise that it is the most important topic for you to study. Perhaps (through this study) Allāh will save you from this evil trap, meaning *shirk* with Allāh, concerning which Allāh - the Exalted - has said:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَغْفِرُ أَنْ يُشْرَكَ بِهِ وَيَغْفِرُ مَا دُونَ
ذَلِكَ لِمَنْ يَشَاءُ

“Indeed, Allāh does not forgive association (*shirk*) with Him, but He forgives what is less than that for whom He wills.” [Sūrah *al-Nisā*’, verse 116]

And this will be (accomplished) through knowing the four principles that Allāh - the Exalted - has mentioned in His book:

The First Principle

To know that the disbelievers whom the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) fought admitted that Allāh - the Exalted - is the Creator, the One who Gives Sustenance, and is in charge of all the affairs, yet this did not enter them into Islām. And the proof is in His, the Exalted's saying:

قُلْ مَنْ يَرْزُقُكُمْ
مِّنَ السَّمَاءِ وَالْأَرْضِ أَمَّنْ يَمْلِكُ السَّمْعَ وَالْأَبْصَرَ وَمَنْ يُخْرِجُ
الْحَيَّ مِنَ الْمَيِّتِ وَيُخْرِجُ الْمَيِّتَ مِنَ الْحَيِّ وَمَنْ يُدِيرُ الْأَمْرَ
فَسَيَقُولُونَ اللَّهُ فَقُلْ أَفَلَا تَتَّقُونَ ﴿٣١﴾

“Say, ‘Who provides for you from the heaven and the earth? Or who controls hearing and the sight and who brings the living out of the dead and brings the dead out of the living and who arranges [every] matter?’ They will say, ‘Allāh,’ so say, ‘Then will you not fear Him?’” [Sūrah Yūnus, verse 31]

The Second Principle

They (the *mushrikīn*) say, “We do not supplicate to them and turn towards them except to seek nearness and intercession (to Allāh).”

And the proof of the ‘nearness’ is in His, the Exalted's saying:

وَالَّذِينَ اتَّخَذُوا مِن دُونِهِ أَوْلِيَاءَ
مَا نَعْبُدُهُمْ إِلَّا لِيُقَرِّبُونَا إِلَى اللَّهِ زُلْفَىٰ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَحْكُمُ بَيْنَهُمْ
فِي مَا هُمْ فِيهِ يَخْتَلِفُونَ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَهْدِي مَنْ هُوَ كَاذِبٌ
كَفَّارٌ ﴿٣٢﴾

“And those who take protectors besides Him [say], ‘We only worship them that they may bring us nearer to Allāh in position.’ Indeed Allāh will judge between them concerning that over what they differ. Indeed, Allāh does not guide he who is a liar and [confirmed] disbeliever.” [Sūrah al-Zumar, verse 3]

And the proof of the ‘intercession’ (*shafā‘ah*) is in His, the Exalted's saying: